

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 00400 191648Z
ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN
USIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR SY LE XF
SUBJ: JANUARY 19 SYRIAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHT FRANGIE-GEMAYEL TALKS WITH
ASAD

1. MEDIA STRESSED VISIT BY FRANGIE AND GEMAYEL TO DAMASCUS,
ARAFAT-ASAD METTING AND TLASS-JAMIL SPEECHES TO SYRIAN
TROOPS IN LEBANON. PRESS BANNERED: "PRES ASAD REVIEWS
WITH FRANGIE AND GEMAYEL PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE AND SECURITY.
ASAD -- 'WE FEEL HAPPY THAT KILLING HAS STOPPED IN LEBANON.'
FRANGIE AND GEMAYEL PRAISE RESULTS OF SYRIAN INITIATIVE --
'HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR PRES ASAD'S EFFORTS, LEBANESE PROBLEM
WOULD HAVE TURNED INTO ISSUE EXCEEDING IN DANGER THAT OF
ISRAELI PRESENCE.'" ASAD RECEIVED FRANGIE, GEMAYEL AND
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TONY FRANGIE AT NOON JAN 18 IN PRESENCE OF PRIMIN
KHULAYFAWI, MINSTATE FOR FONAFAIRS ADI AND MINSTATE FOR
PRESIDENTIAL AFFAIRS MILHIM. FOLLOWING MEETINGS, ASAD
STATED THAT, "DISCUSSIONS DEALT WITH CURRENT SITUATION
IN LEBANON. WE FOUND DURING TALKS THAT SITUATION WAS
GOOD. WE DID NOT GO INTO DETAILS. DISCUSSION WAS GENERAL,
DEALING ONLY WITH LEBANON." ASAD ASSERTED SITUATION IN

LEBANON WAS IMPROVING, AND SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO VISIT FROM PRES SARKIS. HE CONCLUDED WITH LENGTHY PRAISE FOR "FREE PRESS" IN LEBANON. DELEGATION RETURNED TO BEIRUT SAME EVENING.

2. MEDIA REPORTED JAMIL AND TLASS VISITED SYRIAN TROOPS IN LEBANON JAN 18. TLASS STATED THAT RESULTS OF RIYADH AND CAIRO SUMMITS PROVE THAT "ENTIRE ARAB NATION HAS ACKNOWLEDGED SOUNDNESS OF SYRIAN INITIATIVE IN LEBANON." HE PRAISED RECEPTION ACCORDED TO ADF TROOPS IN TRIPOLI, SIDON AND BEIRUT, AND REITERATED SYRIAN INTENTION TO COLLECT ALL TYPES OF WEAPONS IN LEBANON.

3. MEDIA REPORTED PRES ASAD RECEIVED PLO LEADER YASIR ARAFAT EVENING JAN 18 TO DISCUSS "LATEST DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING PALESTINIAN CAUSE AND SITUATION IN LEBANON."

4. PRESS NOTED THAT WEST BERLIN BRANCH OF UNION OF SYRIAN STUDENTS HAD CABLED ARAB LEAGUE SEC GEN, HEAD OF IRAQI REGIME AND ARAB AMBASSADORS IN BONN TO DENOUNCE "IRRESPONSIBLE ACTIONS OF IRAQI REGIME IN DEPARTING FROM ARAB CONSENSUS AND SOLIDARITY" AND TO DEMAND INTERVENTION TO SAVE "HUNDREDS OF POLITICAL DETAINEES OF VARIOUS POLITICAL PERSUASIONS" BEING SUBJECT TO PERSECUTION IN IRAQ BY AUTHORITIES.

5. AL-BAATH EDITORIAL ASSERTED THAT ISRAEL "SUFFERING FROM EVIDENT DIPLOMATIC ISOLATION," AND, REFERRING TO ISRAELI COS GUR'S STATEMENTS, WARNED THAT ISRAELIS MIGHT UNCLASSIFIED

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LAUNCH PRE-EMTIVE ATTACK TO : (A) RESTORE INTERNAL COHESION, (B) COMPEL WITHDRAWAL OF SYRIAN FORCES FROM LEBANON, AND (C) UNDERMINE MOMENTUM TOWARD CONVENING GENEVA CONFERENCE. AL-THAWRAH COLUMNIST OBSERVED THAT ISRAELIS, RATHER THAN ARABS, TALKING PUBLICLY ABOUT WAR. HE ASSERTED THAT, IN SPITE OF ISRAELI "INTIMIDATION," ARABS "WILL SPARE NO MILITARY OR ECONOMIC FORMULA TO COMPEL ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND SECURE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING ESTABLISHMENT OF INDEPENDENT STATE.

6. COMMENT: VISIT OF FRANGIE AND GEMAYEL, DISPATCH OF TLASS AND JAMIL TO LEBANON AND DISCUSSION OF LEBANESE SITUATION IN ARAFAT-ASAD MEETING SUGGEST SARG BELIEVES TIME HAS COME TO WEIGH IN WITH EFFORTS TO STIMULATE FURTHER MOVEMENT ON SECURITY FRONT IN LEBANON.
MURPHY

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